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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
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Hugh G. Calkins  
Regional Conservator

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION  
OF  
SECTION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT  
IN  
REGION 8

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INTRODUCTION

Soil conservation work has been under way in various portions of Region 8 since 1934, and the development of an integrated soil conservation program has been carried forward to guide operations activities. Wildlife management was included as one of the Soil Conservation Service activities early in the program, and now has a



background of more than two years' activity. It seems desirable to evaluate the experience of those years, and to develop a statement of the place of wildlife management in the Soil Conservation Service activities in this Region.

All of the Service personnel, and a great many of the cooperators with whom we work, enthusiastically subscribe to the principles of wildlife conservation. During the early period of our activities it was not clear, however, in just what ways soil conservation activities specifically contribute to wildlife conservation, nor was it clear to what extent wildlife management is a proper Soil Conservation Service activity. Many projects have been initiated during the past two years; examination of these indicates that many of them are valuable to wildlife and still are essentially soil conservation activities. This bulletin and the others that will soon appear attempt to present the characteristic features of that type of activity which incorporates wildlife management with soil conservation.

At the inception of work in this Region, the Service activities were carried on by several individual projects organized in different ways and operating according to somewhat different basic policies. In September, 1935, the Southwest Region was organized to provide a basic homogeneity to all of the Soil Conservation Service operations in this Region. The wide variety of conditions and the existence of several established projects differing somewhat in their character, has made the process of organizational





adjustment a slow one. In some respects this has been fortunate in that too rapid standardization might have resulted in inhibiting the development of new and desirable approaches to the tasks of this Service. That process has, however, gone forward to a point where it is now possible to indicate the functions of the District staffs in wildlife management work and their relation to the rest of the technical staff and to the Regional office.

The material presented in these bulletins was developed by all of the biologists working in Region 8. On February 25 the District Biologists met with the Regional staff and spent several days discussing basic policy and technical and administrative problems. At the conclusion of the conferences, various sections of this paper were prepared by the field men and the material was later drawn together in the Regional office.

This statement should be considered as a current evaluation of the place of wildlife management in the work of Region 8. Some aspects of the work have been omitted because no attempt is made to present a complete and detailed description of wildlife management activities. This statement, furthermore, should be considered more as a mile-post along a route rather than as the final objective. It is believed that with continuing activity of the Service in the further development of the soil conservation program, that concept will develop and new functions will have to be assumed. From time to time, therefore, revision of



these bulletins is contemplated, and additional and more complete descriptions of wildlife management activities will be attempted.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE SECTION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The technical staff of the Soil Conservation Service in Region 8 is organized in separate sections for each of the major technologies, but not all of them exist as separate sections in each of the Districts, the function of some sections being combined with that of others. Most of these sections are organized on an operating functional as well as a technical advisory basis; ordinarily their activities are correlated and directed by a District Planning Board, the personnel of which is recruited from the various sections.

The Section of Wildlife Management was established as a regional activity in November 1935 and a regional biologist was obtained by a transfer from the Navajo District. In December 1935 a junior biologist was assigned to the staff, and in August 1936 an assistant biologist was transferred from the Navajo District to the Regional office.

Biological activities were undertaken in the Navajo District in 1934 when there was established a Branch of Agronomy and Biology with one assistant biologist. These two activities were separated in 1934 and a Branch of Biology created; an additional assistant biologist was secured in August 1935 and another in September 1935. The Branch of Biology was discontinued in the spring of 1936 and a Section of Range and Wildlife Management



established. One junior biologist and two biological aides were added to this staff in the summer of 1936. At present Wildlife Management is again a separate branch coordinate with the other technical branches. Transfers out of the district have removed two assistant biologists and one biological aide from the staff.

The Rio Grande District established a Section of Agronomy and Wildlife Management in December 1935 with one junior biologist and one biological aide. A separate Section of Wildlife Management was set up in October 1936, and a senior biological aide added to the staff. Early in 1937 a range aide was semi-permanently assigned to this section.

A Section of Wildlife Management, with two biological aides, was set up on the Gila District in November 1935. A junior biologist was added in December 1935. The present staff consists of one assistant biologist and one biological aide.

The Utah Projects have not been established as a District and as yet there is no formal Section of Wildlife Management. A biological aide was assigned to this project in December 1935 and transferred to a different section in September 1937.

Wildlife management work is now being conducted in the three Districts and in the Utah Project. There is a total of twelve biologists in the regional and district offices, distributed as follows:





Regional Office	3
Navajo District	3
Rio Grande District	4
Gila District	2
Utah Projects	0

The relatively large personnel of the Regional office of Wildlife Management in comparison to the size of the District staffs is necessitated for two reasons. The first of these is that the limited number of personnel in the District organizations has made it necessary for the Regional office to assume a large share of certain types of technical work. Among these are the development of basic information concerning the desirable wildlife food plants which may be effectively used in erosion control, and the determination of what mixtures of plant species are most beneficial to wildlife in the various habitats. Other such activities are the development of methods for best adapting water retention structures for aquatic wildlife, and effective ways of increasing the resistance of earthwork construction to rodent burrowing. The second reason for the relatively large Regional personnel is that no wildlife management work comparable to that undertaken by the Service has hitherto been carried forward in this part of the country. The absence of adequate previous experience requires that considerable attention be given to the development of methods and procedures, and repeated checks be made on the adequacy with which they fulfill our requirements. For some time to come, it is believed that the Regional field of





activity in wildlife management will continue to represent an equally large porportion of the work.

FUNCTIONS OF THE SECTION OF WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT  
AND ITS RELATION TO OTHER SECTIONS OF THE SERVICE

Objective

The objective of the section is to adapt the operations of the Soil Conservation Service to the maximum benefit of wildlife, consistent with the conservation of soil and water and the primary use of the land.

Field of Activity

The Section of Wildlife Management is primarily concerned with wild vertebrate animals in their relation to soil and water conservation activities. This concern involves the development of wildlife resources and the regulation of such of these as are detrimental to the soil conservation program. Secondarily, the section, in cooperation with other sections of the Service, and with the several technical bureaus involved, is concerned with analyzing and recommending in problems concerning the control of such pests as weeds, insects, plant diseases and livestock diseases as they affect Soil Conservation Service activities.

Function

The function of the section is to plan, develop, generally supervise and coordinate with other activities of the Soil Conservation Service, a program of wildlife management designed to:

1. Avoid, so far as is practicable, acts that would be



detrimental to desirable forms or might encourage undesirable forms of wildlife.

2. Improve conditions for wildlife as a whole, with due regard for its several values, biologic and social.

3. Produce an annual replaceable increment of game, furbearers, and game fish as a means of providing supplemental compensation to the farmer and rancher for lands retired from cultivation or grazing through the operation of the soil conservation program.

4. Cooperate with the other sections and with the several technical bureaus involved in protecting Soil Conservation Service activities from damage or interference by wildlife, insects, plants, or diseases.

#### Basic Concepts

According to the present interpretation of the various acts establishing and providing funds for the Soil Conservation Service, the primary objective of the Service is the conservation of soil and water. All activities must therefore be directed towards the accomplishment of this objective. There is no justification for any operation which does not make a definite contribution, either directly or indirectly, to the control of erosion. This limitation need not deter wildlife management work because many of the practices which are advantageous in the conservation of soil and water may be made to create conditions favorable



to wildlife; further, the production of wildlife is a means of providing supplemental compensation, either monetary or esthetic, to the rancher or farmer for lands retired from cultivation or grazing through the operation of the soil conservation program.

The restoration, alteration, and management of vegetation is the primary means of both soil conservation and wildlife management. The Section of Wildlife Management must therefore be concerned with every plan which has any bearing upon vegetation. Through the modification of these plans the habitat of desirable forms of wildlife can be maintained and improved. For the wildlife management program to be successful it is necessary for the Section of Wildlife Management to cooperate closely with the other sections of the Service; to have a general knowledge of soil conservation activities and methods; to assist the other sections in the incorporation of wildlife management into their work plans; and to supply technical supervision of the work.

#### Correlation of Wildlife Management Activities with other Soil Conservation Activities

The adaptation of soil conservation activities to the management of wildlife may be accomplished in two ways: (1) the review and modification of work plans prepared by other sections, and (2) the survey of the area under consideration and the preparation, in collaboration with other sections, of a wildlife management plan which will be given consideration in the preparation of the work plans. The first method should be resorted to only in cases where there has been no opportunity to conduct a survey. The second method is the basic approach for wildlife management.





The wildlife management plan will be based on the results of an ecologic survey completed prior to the development of the work plans for the area under consideration. It will be prepared in collaboration with a representative of the section which is responsible for operations, and when necessary the Section of Wildlife Management will technically direct certain operations. Agreements have been made with other sections whereby wildlife management will be given consideration. The following are examples of these:

Agricultural Practices. The Section of Wildlife Management will participate in the planning and execution of agronomic practices affecting wildlife habitats on farms. Such participation, leading to the production of wildlife, is considered a way of providing supplemental compensation to the farmer and rancher for lands retired from cultivation or grazing through operation of a soil conservation program.

Earth Structures. The Section of Wildlife Management will collaborate with the Section of Engineering in designing earth structures so that such structures offer minimum attraction to rodents and maximum resistance to their burrowing. In the case of plantings for the protection of structures, this section will cooperate in selecting those plant species which are least attractive to burrowing rodents.

The Section of Wildlife Management will collaborate with the Section of Engineering in designing structures affecting waters





so that such waters will be of maximum benefit to wildlife consistent with other interests.

Woodland Management Plans. Since natural woodland stands in this Region are, as a rule, multiple use areas, woodland plans will be coordinated with those of wildlife, range, and other interests concerned, to see that each is given proper consideration. In order to realize the full monetary, recreational, and esthetic values of the woodland, the forester will confer with the biologist to assure that consideration will be given to the uses of the area for wildlife.

Woodland Cutting Practices. It is recognized that extreme differences in the woodland problem are to be found within this Region. These differences are often too basic as regards silvics, utilization factors, water and soil conservation problems, range management and wildlife management, to permit uniform or blanket regulation of cutting. Under general guidance from the regional office each District should be charged with responsibility for devising practical and effective policies and methods for accomplishing its particular objectives.

It is recommended that cuts be made only when approved mutually by the Sections of Wildlife Management and Woodland Management. Early attention should be given to the determination of what are the minimum requirements of various kinds of wildlife with respect to best silvicultural practice. Such information should make it possible to arrive at mutual agreement as to the number of wolf trees or other trees, in any given area, that although undesirable from the



silvicultural point of view, should be undisturbed for the benefit of present or potential wildlife populations.

Woodland Grazing. The Section of Wildlife Management will collaborate with the Sections of Range Management and Woodland Management in determining proper grazing practices in woodland and forest where such grazing directly affects the welfare of local wildlife.

Range Use. The Section of Wildlife Management will collaborate with the Section of Range Management in determining the proper consideration to be given wildlife in range use.

Range Revegetation. The Section of Wildlife Management will collaborate with the duly designated planning agency in determining the proper species and composition and arrangement of species-mixtures so that plantings, although designed primarily to check erosion or to revegetate the range, will also benefit wildlife as fully as possible.

Planting for Wildlife. The Section of Wildlife Management will prepare a list of plant species which are of value to wildlife as well as to erosion control, and will make this list available to the planting groups. Close association will be maintained between the biologists and the planning parties to insure fullest consideration of the requirements of wildlife in planning revegetation activities. In some cases, where a particular location may materially benefit wildlife, the Section of Wildlife Management should be given the major responsibility for planning the revegetation work and if necessary supervising its execution.

